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ABSTRACT

Performance evaluation is designed to assist principals in better accomplishing their leadership role. Performance/Outcome Based Principal Evaluation (PBPE) is defined as "a process for the professional development of principals through the identification of job-related expectations, documentation of skills regarding those expectations, feedback regarding skill level, opportunity to improve skill, and job-related decision making." The first two phases of the evaluation, developmental and preparatory, involve the construction of an evaluation committee and the training of the evaluators on that committee, respectively. The formative phase outlines the two-dimensional approach to evaluation: (1) procedures for assessing and improving specific skills (criteria) and (2) procedures for improving the ability to provide direction for the school (goals). Associated with effective implementation are these considerations: (1) the onsite observations of the principal by an evaluator, (2) the postobservation conference between principal and evaluator, (3) the professional development plan developed by the principal and the evaluator, (4) the goal statement representing a direction for the school, and (5) the improvement of evaluative skills. Included in the paper is a figure representing the PBPE procedural outline. (WTH)

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PERFORMANCE/OUTCOME BASED PRINCIPAL EVALUATION: A SUMMARY OF PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

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PERFORMANCE/OUTCOME BASED PRINCIPAL EVALUATION:

A SUMMARY OF PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Jerry W. Valentine
April, 1986

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Building administrators are key persons in the operation of an effective school. Though seldom involved directly in teaching students, the principal's impact upon the educational program is greater than any other single invididual. Performance evaluation is designed to assist principals in better accomplishing their leadership role. PBPE is defined as "a process for the professional development of principals through the identification of job related expectations, documentation of skills regarding those expectations, feedback regarding skill level, opportunity to improve skill and job related decision making." This process applies to all building level administrators, e.g. assistant principals, associate principals.

Development Phase. The performance evaluation process should be developed through a committee which includes representation of those persons directly affected by the process and other relevant parties such as central office personnel, teachers, board members, etc.

Preparatory Phase. Once the process and appropriate forms are developed, each evaluator should receive training in the process and each person evaluated should be inserviced regarding the procedures to be followed and the professional expectations.

Formative Phase. The evaluation process for principals includes procedures for assessing and improving specific skills (criteria) and the ability to provide direction for the school (goals). This two dimensional approach to evaluation is particularly important. The principal must perform the functions of the job (criteria) at an acceptable skill level while maintaining a perspective on the operation of the school and working with school personnel to develop short and long range plans and implement those plans effectively. The identification and accomplishment of desired outcomes (school goals) is essential in the effective evaluation process for principals.

Observation of Performance--To accurately assess performance, on-site observation of a principal's skill is necessary. During the observation, the evaluator should take notes, then transfer those notes to a Formative Feedback Form so the data are grouped by criterion.

Performance Feedback--Following an on-site observation, the evaluator and principal should reivew the Formative Feedback Form and discuss the principal's performance on each criterion. This feedback should occur as soon as feasible after the observation, with particular attention to providing the feedback within 48 hours after the observation.

Performance Improvement--Professional growth is appropriate for all principals, whether highly skilled or not skilled. The professional development plan (sometimes called a job target or personal improvement plan) is the developmental focus of the evaluation process. The evaluator and principal should work together to identify a professional development plan for each principal on a periodic basis. Performance on a criterion does not have to be below expectation to work toward improvement. "You don't have to be ill to get better."

Non-observed Feedback--The evaluator often receives information relative to performance that is not observed first hand by the evaluator. A letter to the superintendent, a phone call, a discussion after church, etc. are typical of the manner in which educational issues surface. Sometimes the comments are positive, other times they represent concerns. The evaluator should remember that if concerns are expressed and are of a significant nature to warrant used in the summative assessment, the evaluator should share those concerns as soon as feasible and provide the principal with the opportunity to address and resolve the issues. This should include documentation of the issue on the Formative Feedback Form next to the appropriate criterion, and discussion of the issue.

Goal Feedback--Accomplishment of school goals should be discussed and documented during the formative evaluation phase using the Goal Statement Feedback Form. The principal will typically assess enroute accomplishment and the evaluator will typically review that assessment and respond accordingly. This should occur on a periodic basis during the school year and can often be accomplished during feedback conferences following on-site observations.

Summative Phase. Summative judgments are made relative to the performance criteria and the school goals. Summative evaluation forms for the criteria and the goal statements should be completed by the evaluator as required by policy. The summative judgments should represent a synthesis of information from the formative phase. Ratings below expected performance should not be given unless they were preceeded by identification of the concern and opportunity to improve performance before the final rating.

The following sections of this brochure are presented as reminders of important implementation concepts associated with effective implemention of performance based principal evaluation.

ON-SITE OBSERVATIONS

To improve performance, principals need accurate, objective feedback about their administrative skills. To obtain those data, the evaluator should "shadow" the principal from a distance close enough to understand the interactions and activities, but not so close as to be an impediment to the activities. Because the evaluator is typically the "boss" of the principal, care must be taken not to be involved inappropriately in conversations, usurping the role of the principal. And to counteract the presence of an outsider, the principal should inform the staff and others who the observer is and that their role is one of observing the principal, not the other members of the organization. Typicality can be achieved if explanations are made and the evaluator has a sense of his/her role and the potential impact of his/her presence.

One of the on-site observations should be a "scheduled" observation so the principal can be observed actively involved in instructional improvement. The principal should demonstrate skills in classroom observation, notetaking and post-observation feedback.

The foundation of effective feedback is a quality set of observational notes. Following are specific suggestions for taking good notes.

1. Know and understand the expectations of effective building administration. The criteria are those expectations, the descriptors communicate the meaning of the criteria.
2. Record behavior relative to the criteria. Include what the principal does and says and what others do and say relative to the principal's behavior. Other impressions supported by observed behavior can be noted. For example, if the principal efficiently handles paperwork, a collective impression about organizational ability in routine correspondence and paperwork might be made. But be cautious not to make consistent value judgments without documenting behavior. The observer's role is to document objectively, not to merely record impressions or value judgments.
3. Use the margin to identify the general types of behavior recorded. That will save time in transferring the notes to the Formative Feedback Form and can be quickly referenced during the feedback conference. An example of a marginal note might be "high expectations" as you write in the body of the notes a conversation between principal and teacher where the principal encourages the teacher to strive for a particular goal.
4. Write detailed notes when observing. Evaluators can not effectively remember what was said or done from sketchy notes. The evaluator has an obligation to be as skilled and as helpful as possible to the principal. The better the notes, the more useful the process.

POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

Communication between principal and evaluator is imporant in skill improvement. The conference following the on-site observation formalizes that communication to ensure appropriate skill feedback. Following are issues that should be considered when conducting a post-observation conference.

1. Did the evaluator promote self-assessment? Human nature is such that the motivation to improve, and thus improvement, are enhanced if the evaluator works in a collegial manner with the principal and disucsses the observation so the principal self-assesses his/her behavior rather than the evaluator autoritatively describing what occurred and impressions of the events of the observation. Personnel are more likely to modify behavior if they support the need for change, and are more likely to support the need for change if they have a part in identifying the needed change. Inquiry and open-ended questions and comments can lead to effective conferencing and self-assessment. For example, a good opening question might be, "Based upon the activities you were expecting to occur during the day and the objectives you wanted to accomplish for the day, how did you feel about accomplishing those objectives?" Other key phrases which promote self-assessment include: "Describe how...?" "How did you feel about...?" What were...?" Explain how...?"

2. Did the evaluator share the observation notes and the Formative Feedback Form? Remove the mystique from the observation process by sharing all notes and forms. The notes can be placed on a table between the evaluator and the principal and referenced as appropriate. The evaluator and principal should sit at the corner of a table or desk so they can see the notes together. Avoid sitting across a table or desk in an authoritative, power position.
3. The evaluator should discuss each criterion during the conference. The criteria are the expectations and the principal deserves feedback regarding each criterion. If no information was observed for a criterion, the evaluator should have written "Not Observed" on the Formative Feedback Form. And by covering each criterion, particularly if covered in order on the Form, the evaluator is confident each issue was addressed. That confidence is important at a later date if the principal indicates he/she does not remember discussing the issue. Covering the criteria in order also provides the benefit of not "loading the deck" for the end of the conference. Issues are addressed as they appear on the Form, rather than saving the bombshell for the end and the principal knowing that the good items are covered first and the tough ones last.
4. The evaluator should be sensitive to who does most of the talking during the conference. Self-assessment is important for an evaluator dominated discussion does not promote self-assessment. Principal and evaluator should participate actively in the conference. While there is no exact rule, a goal to work toward might be a split of 50-50%, or maybe 60-40% or 40-60%. As conferencing skills and principal understanding of the process improve, work toward greater principal talk, less evaluator talk.
5. The evaluator is a "teacher" during the conference. Educating the principal regarding improved techniques can be accomplished without creating an overall atmosphere of negativism or autocratic domination. An obvious example would be the principal who is not a good notetaker when observing a classroom teacher. Without demeaning the principal, the evaluator can take the opportunity to suggest how to take notes and give some helpful hints.
6. The attitude and skill of the evaluator and the attitude of the principal greatly affect the quality and type of conference conducted. The evaluator will generally know the situation and can plan accordingly. It would be naive to think that all conferences can be conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Though the process of skill documentation followed by a self-assessment approach to conferencing promotes greater objectivity, communication and trust, some situations dictate a more authoritative style of conference. This should be a last resort, not a rule of thumb. If the evaluator realizes he/she is frequently authoritative, the problem is probably in the evaluator's skill, not the attitude of the principals.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Professional Development Plans are vehicles for professional improvement. They represent a professional growth plan for every principal, not just those who might be struggling. Periodically, each principal should work with the evaluator and develop a Professional Development Plan. This involvement reinforces the positive effort toward improvement, not the negative stigma attached to the principal with "problems."

The Professional Development Plan is designed to communicate expectations for performance. Professional Development Plans represent growth plans for the "performance criteria" in the evaluation process and are not associated with the "building goal statements." The Professional Development Plan is a "personal" improvement plan.

When preparing the Professional Development Plan, responsibilities of both principal and evaluator are stated. Specific objectives are identified. These objectives are frequently "descriptors" for a criterion. Ideally, principal and evaluator work together to develop a Professional Development Plan. This is particularly true for the skilled principal who needs to polish administrative skills.

Professional Development Plans should be reviewed or extended as appropriate. Sometimes alternative approaches to acccomplishing a Professional Development Plan are necessary for success. Other times, the principal and evaluator must accept that the Professional Development Plan cannot be met. In either case, before rating a principal "below expected performance" on a summative report, it is critical that the principal be given the opportunity to improve. The Professional Development Plan is that opportunity. If the principal is not performing at an acceptable level when it is time to complete a summative report, a rating of "below expected performance" is appropriate.

The Professional Development Plan is a systematic process for improvement. The Professional Development Plan criterion and objective are identified and recorded. The performance area is recorded. A "game plan" to meet the objective is developed and itemized in the "procedures" section. Following is a logical, sequential process for working with principals who are interested in improving their skills. This "game plan" can be used in the development of most Professional Development Plans.

1. Provide for education and/or skill improvement, i.e. remediate the knowledge deficiency. Suggest ideas and information to improve knowledge or skill. Utilize resources such as the ones suggested in the publication entitled "PBPE: Resources for Use with Job Targets."
2. Check for comprehension. Confer with the principal to confirm understanding of the skill. If there is concern about understanding, continue remediation. If there is concern about ability to correctly implement the skill, provide for guided practice.
3. Provide opportunity for independent practice. When the principal understands the skill and can implement it correctly, provide time to practice and refine the new knowledge or skill independently before additional observations.
4. Provide specific feedback. Observe the principal implementing the skill or utilize other data to provide the principal with insight regarding the skill.

When establishing Professional Development Plan completion dates, think short-term and long-term dates. The short-term date is the point in time when the new skill should be implemented. The long-term date is the point in time when the new skill should be internalized, i.e. an integral, natural part of the principal's skills. To internalize a new skill and make it a continuing part of a person's reportoire takes time. Set tagret dates which promote long range improvement, not short term change. Remember, a Professional Development Plan does not have to be "completed" during a school year or evaluation cycle. The important issue is that the area for growth has been identified and a plan is in place to accomplish that growth.

GOAL STATEMENTS

Goal statements represent a direction for the school. They should not be confused with the performance criteria or Professional Development Plans associated with the criteria. The Professional Development Plan represents a personal improvement plan, the goal statement a desired outcome for the school community.

The process used for developing school goal statements is critical. Because goal accomplishment typically requires the support and committment of many, a "grass-roots" development should be considered. Appropriate goals are often identified by on-going teacher committees during the spring of the year for the following school year. Four or five goals are typically identified each year, with two or three unique to the needs of the school and the remainder correlated to district-wide goals. Each goal should be stated as an annual goal, with the specific desired outcome identified. Long range goals can be stated, as long as specific measurements can be made each year to determine the degree of accomplishment of the goal.

Goal accomplishment should be assessed during the school year and feedback provided. A Goal Statement Summative Form should be completed at the end of the school year to assess accomplishment of each goal.

IMPROVING EVALUATIVE SKILLS

Developing effective evaluative skills is an on-going process. In recent years our knowledge of effective building administration has grown exponentially. Following are suggestions for maintaining currency in the rapidly growing field of knowledge.

1. Be a seeker of current professional information. None of us can read all the professional journals that cross our desks, nor attend all the conferences we might like to attend. But we can be determined consumers of knowledge and invest our time wisely in selective readings and appropriate conferences.
2. Promote sharing of knowledge and strategies among schools and districts. On-going interaction with neighboring districts to share ideas or unite resources for staff development can be advantageous to the principals and the evaluators. Skill improvement and communication increase evaluator credibility, which increases principals' confidence and openness to improvement, thus enhancing overall principal skill and school effectiveness.
3. Implement staff development strategies that are on-going. Many districts now require a specific number of staff development activities each year. Coordinate the activities to the expectations (criteria) for principals.
4. Provide for on-going assessment and revision of the evaluative process, the criteria and the forms. As our knowledge continues to grow, so too should an evaluative process designed for professional development.

This Summary was written for publication. Reprint only by permission of the author. Jerry W. Valentine, May, 1986. 218 Hill Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. Additional information regarding performance/outcome based evaluation is available from the author through the publication Performance/Outcome Based Evaluation: A Manual for the Evaluation of Certificated Personnel. Due for print in May, 1986, the Manual provides detailed explanations of the author's perspective on the evaluation of certificated personnel (teachers, principals, superintendents, etc.), including evaluative criteria, descriptors, forms and examples of completed forms used in school districts and inservice training.

PERFORMANCE/OUTCOME BASED PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

PROCEDURAL OUTLINE

EVALUATIVE PHASES	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	SCHOOL GOALS	TYPICAL TIMEFRAME
Preparatory:	Clarify expectations Process Criteria Descriptors	Identify School Goals Assess Needs Faculty Input District Goals Building Goals	August
Formative:	Scheduled Observations Notetaking Feedback Form Feedback Conference Prof. Develop. Plan Unscheduled Observations Notetaking Feedback Form Feedback Conference Prof. Develop. Plan Non-Observation Data Document Conference Prof. Develop. Plan	Goal Progress Feedback Form Feedback Conference Goal Modification	Sept. through May
Summative:	Summative Form Performance Levels Summative Conference	Summative Form Goal Accomplishment Summative Conference	January or June
Contractual:	Employment Decision Performance Criteria Summative Evaluation Goal Statement Summative Evaluations		January or June

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